

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PGOV, PEPR, JO, US, XF

SUBJECT: TALK WITH KING--CURRENT SITUATION

REF SECTO 01074

SUMMARY: I BRIEFED KING ON POINTS REFTEL. HE WAS INTERESTED THAT WE SEEM TO REFLECT MORE POSITIVE REACTION TO DEVELOPMENTS IN THE AREA. HE SAID THAT HE REMAINS VERY CONCERNED ABOUT WHAT IS NOW HAPPENING. ONE PRIMARY WORRY IS WHETHER SADAT CAN HOLD EGYPT TOGETHER AND PREVENT OUTBREAK OF INTERNAL TROUBLES. ANOTHER IS WHETHER BEGIN, WITH U.S. HELP, CAN BE BROUGHT TO PROVIDE ENOUGH FLEXIBILITY TO REACH A SETTLEMENT. HE SAYS ARABS ARE TOO DISUNITED TO MOVE ISRAELIS. WHILE NOT AS STRONGLY AS HIS COURT CHIEF, HE IS CONCERNED ABOUT U.S. ROLE WITH ISRAELIS AND THEIR ATTEMPT TO POCKET WHAT THEY HAVE RECEIVED FROM SADAT AND BARGAIN OVER THE REST. HE SEES ANY MEANINGFUL DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES AS BEING NEARLY IMPOSSIBLE. HE INDICATED THAT HE HOPES "OUR FRIENDS IN WASHINGTON UNDERSTAND THAT A REPETITION OF THE OLD AMBIGUITIES ON TERRITORY" WILL NOT HELP TO BROADEN THE TALKS. WE EXAMINED THIS POINT IN SOME DETAIL. HE CLEARLY FEELS THAT TERRITORY IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN AN

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INDEPENDENT PALESTINIAN STATE, BUT WANTS SELF-DETERMINATION TO INVOLVE A WIDE ENOUGH SET OF OPTIONS SO AS NOT TO APPEAR COMPLETELY PRE-COOKED. END SUMMARY

1. I SAW KING LATER AFTERNOON JANUARY 23. HE WAS ANXIOUS TO HEAR FROM US AND I PASSED ON TO HIM POINTS REFTEL. HIS RESPONSE WAS THAT HE IS VERY PESSIMISTIC AND

DOES NOT SEE MUCH HOPE FOR CHANGE. COMBINATION OF SADAT WITHDRAWAL FROM JERUSALEM AND BEGIN'S INTRANSIGENCE LEADS HIM TO BELIEVE SADAT IS HEADED FOR TROUBLE AT HOME. JANUARY RIOTS HAD BROKEN OUT IN CAIRO OVER LESS; IF SADAT COULD NOT KEEP UP MOMENTUM, THERE SEEMED TO BE NO WAY HE COULD SOLVE HIS PROBLEMS.

2. HE ALSO NOTED THAT ARAB DISUNITY CONTRIBUTED TO SADAT'S INABILITY TO MAKE ISRAELIS MOVE, BEGIN CLEARLY KNEW HE HAD SADAT IN A WEAKENED POSITION AND THAT THE ARABS COULD NOT PULL TOGETHER ENOUGH TO GIVE SADAT REAL SUPPORT. THE U.S. HAD BEEN EXPECTED TO DO MORE.

3. AT THIS POINT I TOLD HIM THAT WE WERE IN FOR THE LONG HAUL AND THAT IMMEDIATE MIRACLES COULD NOT BE EXPECTED. THERE WERE WAYS IN WHICH WE COULD BE HELPFUL, BUT IN ANY REAL NEGOTIATIONS WE HAD TO EXPECT UPS AND DOWNS. I KNEW THAT IN JORDAN AT THE MOMENT THE PUBLIC WAS COMPLAINING ABOUT THE U.S. AND, AS THEY SAW IT, THE FAILURE OF THE U.S. TO DO ANYTHING TO SUPPORT SADAT. OUR ROLE IN WORKING OUT THE AGENDA, AND OUR CONTINUING TO MAKE PROGRESS ON THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES WERE ALL IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTIONS. (HIS COURT CHIEF SHARAF HAD BEEN IN TOUCH OVER LAST FEW DAYS TO EXPRESS HIS DISAPPOINTMENT AND HIS HOPE THAT OUR ROLE WOULD BECOME MORE ACTIVE AND SUPPORTIVE OF
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SADAT). HUSSEIN SEEMED LESS PERTURBED ON THIS ISSUE THEN SHARAF, BUT NEVERTHELESS CONVEYED HIS REAL CONCERN.

4. HE THEN TURNED TO THE QUESTION OF A DECLARATION. HE SAID HE THOUGHT STILL THAT ANY DECLARATION TO BE USEFUL WOULD HAVE TO MOVE THE TERRITORIAL WITHDRAWAL QUESTION BEYOND THE AMBIGUITIES OF 242. ANYTHING LESS WOULD CALL INTO QUESTION THE PRESENT ARAB (AND U.S. HE SAID) INTERPRETATION OF 242 AS REQUIRING FULL WITHDRAWAL. THIS WAS A CRUCIAL QUESTION. WE THEN DISCUSSED SELF-DETERMINATION. HE THOUGHT THAT BEGIN WAS MAKING A MISTAKE IN EQUATING SELF-DETERMINATION WITH AN INDEPENDENT, PLO-RUN PALESTINIAN STATE. WHILE HE WOULD LIKE TO LEAVE OPEN AN OPTION, IF AT ALL POSSIBLE, FOR AN INDEPENDENT DEMILITARIZED STATE, WITH THE ALTERNATIVE BEING LINKS TO JORDAN, HE THOUGHT THE MAJORITY WOULD CHOOSE JORDAN. BUT IF THE PROCESS WERE CARRIED OUT IN A WAY THAT LEFT QUESTIONS ABOUT ITS FAIRNESS, THE IRREDENTISM OF THE PALESTINIANS WOULD CONTINUE. THE QUICKEST WAY TO BUY TROUBLE ON THE WEST BANK WOULD BE FOR THE ISRAELIS TO PROVIDE ONLY SMALL WITHDRAWALS,

KEEPING THE ENLARGED JERUSALEM AREA, SETTLEMENTS AND
CONTONMENTS ALL OVER THE AREA. THAT WOULD ENSURE THE
RADICALIZATION OF THE WEST BANK. KING MADE CLEAR HOWEVER
THAT TERRITORIAL WITHDRAWAL MORE IMPORTANT THAN SELF-DETERMINATION
AND THAT WITH REGARD TO LATTER "NEGOTIATIONS" COULD PROBABLY
WORK OUT BEGIN'S DIFFICULTIES.

5. COMMENT: KING'S REACTION IS CLEARLY IN LINE WITH
POINTS HE HAS MADE BEFORE. WE SHOULD NOT UNDERESTIMATE
THE DELETERIOUS EFFECT WHICH RECENT EVENTS HAVE HAD HERE ON
JORDANIANS UP TO AND INCLUDING THE KING ON CONFIDENCE IN THE
U.S. AND ITS ROLE. IT IS BADLY SHAKEN. AS BETWEEN TERRITORY
OR AN INDEPENDENT STATE, KING CLEARLY LEANS TOWARD
FORMER, BUT DOES NOT WANT TO BE PARTY TO AN AGREEMENT
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WHICH WILL BE SEEN TO LIMIT DIRECTLY AND TOO OSTENTATIOUSLY
PALESTINIAN FREEDOM OF CHOICE.

6. SUGGEST DEPARTMENT PASS USDEL JERUSALEM FOR
ATHERTON.
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